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THE STRIPED CUCUMBER BEETLE

The adult striped cucumber beetle (Diabrotica vittata) is a pest which feeds upon the foliage of cucumbers and related plants and is quite destructive to the seedling crop. The beetle is about 1/4 inch long, yellow in color, with three broad black stripes on the wing covers. It usually appears in the fields about the end of May or the first of June. It may come in to the cultivated fields rather suddenly and in large numbers. There are several methods of control recommended for this beetle. One which has given very good results in the more northern states consists of dusting with a mixture of calcium arsenate and gypsum or land plaster. This dust mixture is prepared by mixing one part of the calcium arsenate to fifteen parts of the gypsum or land plaster. This material, besides being a stomach poison, also acts as a repellent. Therefore the plants should be kept fairly well covered with it from the time they appear above ground until they have reached the runner stage. After reaching the runner stage the plant is usually able to withstand an attack of the beetles. The control of the beetle early in the season will in a large measure reduce the infestation of the roots by the worms later in the season since it is these beetles which lay the eggs from which the root-infesting worms develop. The dust should not be applied after the fruits are half-grown, as there is danger of poisonous residues occurring on the marketed product with later application.

The immature form of the striped cucumber beetle feeds as a small white larvae at the roots of the plants. We do not have any method for controlling these worms once they have reached the roots of the plant, and about the only thing that can be done in such cases is to keep the infested plants in as good a growing condition as possible. It will be of some benefit, especially during dry periods, to keep the soil about the plant in a well-mulched condition. A well-developed and healthy cucumber plant can withstand the attack of several worms at its roots.

The beetle is also responsible for spreading certain diseases from plant to plant and may cause serious injury in this way.

TRUCK AND GARDEN CROP  
INSECT INVESTIGATIONS

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